It may have adopted these from the "barbarians" with whom it fought on its western and northern frontiers. Ch'i and Ch'u occasionally stopped their own quarreling to unite against the common enemy, but formed no permanent alliance. Early in the third century Ch'i was practically eliminated as a major power. Its prince, in attacking his neighbor (possibly with the purpose of mastering China), brought down on his head a number of the other states and was disastrously defeated. The ruin of Ch'i strengthened Ch'in. In the first half of the third century Ch'in repeatedly defeated Ch'u and annexed much of its territory.

In the struggle between the great rivals, the prestige and the power of the Chou sank ever lower and lower. The rulers of the more prominent of the feudal states had for some time assumed the title of *Wang,* heretofore the exclusive designation of the Chou monarchs—thereby probably in effect declaring their equality with the house of Chou and possibly indicating their ambition to master all China. In the middle of the third century B.C.,, Ch'in wrested from Nan Wang, the last of the Chou to wear that title, the western portion of his small remaining territory and carried off the nine tripods which, alleged to have been handed down from the Emperor Yu, were esteemed as symbols of supreme power. On the death of Nan Wang, in B.C. 256, a relative, under the designation of Eastern Chou Prince *(Tung Chou. Chun),* maintained for a short time something of a semblance of authority, until, in B.C. 249, he in his turn was defeated by Ch'in and forfeited his territory to the victor.

The extinction of the Chou was, however, by no means the last of the steps necessary to assure Ch'in the Empire. Other and more powerful rivals had to be overcome. The final

victory was under the direction of one of the most important and interesting figures in all Chinese history, he who is known to posterity as Shih Huang Ti. To the birth and tutelage of this unifier of China a peculiar story is attached. In the third century B.C., a prince of Ch'in, a not particularly clever fellow, was in exile, and while he was there an unusually able man, Lii Pu-wei, a merchant, who saw in him an opportunity for advancement, attached himself to him. Lii Pu-wei, by skillful management, obtained for his princely patron the appointment to the succession to the throne of Ch'in. Lii Pu-wei had a beautiful and charming